



International Federation
of Organic Agriculture Movements
EU Regional Group



PRESS RELEASE

Major EU farmer and farm worker representatives call on Council to safeguard the future of organic production in Europe

Brussels, 5 May 2015 – On the occasion of yesterday’s meeting of the EU Special Committee on Agriculture and ahead of EU Ministers meeting, Copa-Cogeca, EFFAT and IFOAM EU urged in a letter sent to EU Agriculture Ministers to safeguard the European organic sector and not introduce measures that could threaten its development.

As the representatives of 23 million farmers and their families, including more than 250,000 EU organic farmers and 2.6 million workers, they asked Ministers to harmonise procedures for pesticide contamination, instead of introducing a decertification threshold, and to combine risk-based inspections whilst maintaining yearly controls.

“Organic farmers must be rewarded for their services to society and the environment, not punished for pesticides they have not introduced into the system”, said IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter. “The decertification proposal is not only wrong-headed it could also jeopardise organic farmers who could not bear the financial risk entailed. In our opinion, this would threaten the peaceful co-existence of organic and conventional farmers in rural areas. As long as there are no harmonised rules at European level on the facilities, methods and investigative parameters used by European laboratories the implementation of such decertification thresholds would in practice not even be feasible.”

“The new EU regulation should support the development of the EU organic farming sector, ensuring that 250,000 farmers could earn a living from their activities. The requirement to have yearly controls for organic farmers should be maintained, as it is a basis for consumer trust in organic farming and it is beneficial for farmers in relation to consumers. In the context of rapid changes to the EU regulation, the control bodies can also provide guidance to organic farmers that risk not being compliant with the legal requirements”, Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General of Copa-Cogeca said.

“Organic production is one of the few growing sectors in food production and is a labour intensive production system providing millions of valuable workplaces throughout Europe. We therefore call on the Commission and member states to support the development of organic food and farming in Europe, not to put it at risk through unrealistic proposals”, added Arnd Spahn, Secretary for the agriculture sector of EFFAT.

COPA COGECA, EFFAT and IFOAM EU call on Ministers to act in the interests of millions of farmers and workers by making sure the political and legal framework for European organic farming is favourable to its development.

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IFOAM EU represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

Copa-Cogeca is the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents 23 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 66 member organisations from the EU member states.

EFFAT is the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors. As a European Trade Union Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 2.6 million members towards the European Institutions, European employers' associations and transnational companies. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organization of the IUF.